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# ENG 2011G-004: Literature, Self and the World: Drama

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**ENGLISH 2011G – LITERATURE, SELF AND THE WORLD: DRAMA**

Spring 2003 / Section 004  
 MWF 11-11:50 AM  
 Coleman Hall 3150

Dr. Chris Wixson  
 Coleman Hall 3015  
 Office Hours: 12-2:00 MW  
 (Or by appointment)

Required Textbooks: *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*, ed. Lee Jacobus  
*Closer*, Patrick Marber  
*The Blue Room*, David Hare

Required Supplies: A notebook and a folder for notes, handouts, and in-class work

**Course Philosophy**

*[The study of literature can provide us with] a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us.*  
 -Adrienne Rich

This course surveys dramatic literature with the aim of introducing you to a variety of theatrical forms and experiences. The selection of primary texts will be wide-ranging to represent a number of different dramatic forms and perspectives, from the "greats" of earlier periods (Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Ibsen) to contemporary writers like Brian Friel, Yasmina Reza, and Eugene Ionesco. Our thematic inquiry will be focused around social and sexual politics and, we will consider these issues as they affect and are affected by factors of gender, race, class, genre, and style. The course approaches these plays as both literary \*and\* theatrical texts, discussing not only their political, historical, and modern implications but also their potential for acting, directorial, and technical choices.

The complexity of these plays in terms of language, style, and thematics makes this course both reading and thinking intensive. It has a demanding assignment schedule that necessitates time and planning in order to pass this course. Since 2011 involves a fair amount of writing, we will spend some time in class talking about the organization and construction of strong interpretive arguments. The format of each class will be relatively fluid, changing with regard to the material, my ideas, and your interests. The first meeting on each text will be an informal lecture while the remaining meetings will rely primarily on discussion. As such, this course should **focus** primarily on **you**, your questions, and impressions. Remember this is not MY class but ours, understood as an ongoing conversation. As such, enrollment necessitates a commitment to class discussion (beyond merely showing up) and courageous consideration of ideas about art, interpretation, writing, culture, existence, and desire. Finally, 2011 is a *writing-centered* course, from which you will be submitting essays for inclusion in your university-required portfolios. Please let me know if you wish to discuss this requirement and its procedure.

## Learning Outcomes

1. To write expository and persuasive papers in which paragraphs, sentences, and words develop a central idea that responds to reading of drama.
2. To read drama expressing a wide range of cultural perspectives and values and to think critically and write analytically about them.
3. To engage in reading and writing experiences about literature so as to establish a foundation for continued social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic discovery and appreciation.

## Course Policies

### Attendance

I expect you to be in class awake and prepared every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In other words, arrive on time with your reading/writing assignment completed, prepared to participate in discussion. If you are not a “noontime” person, it is important to realize that now and switch into one of the other sections. Because so much in this course relies upon in-class work, frequent absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your course performance. Thus, your regular attendance is expected; be advised that exams and paper topics will draw heavily from material discussed in class. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. More than three unexcused absences will result in your term grade being lowered by a third for each session missed beyond three. Since coming late or leaving early is extremely disruptive, habitual lateness will also negatively affect your term grade. Please notify me by email if there is unexpected illness or an emergency that causes you to miss class. Do not get in touch asking “for the assignment” or a “rundown of what you missed.” My responsibilities as an instructor lie with the students who do come to class.

**\*\*If you have a *documented* disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.**

### Late papers

These are no fun for me to keep track of and only put you further behind. For each day beyond the scheduled due date, late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade. **After a week, I will no longer accept the paper, and it becomes a “0.”** Again, if you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please email me as soon as possible and stay in touch.

### Plagiarism

Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author--that the wording and major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by either quotation marks and/or citations. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use (appropriation and/or imitation) of others' materials (words and ideas). We will discuss how to avoid it. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, and a report filed with the Judicial Affairs Office.

## **Class Participation**

You should come to class prepared to talk about the reading for that day. Each class session will be a mixture of informal lecture and discussion; thus, your own questions and comments about the plays are essential to the success of the course. You will also need to have completed the assigned reading and (when noted) your typed “seed paper.” If there are no questions or a lagging discussion, I will assume that you understand the text perfectly and will give a **quiz** worth as much as a seed essay.

## **Email**

You should get into the habit of checking your email daily. There will be a class list on which I will post changes in assignments (if they arise), course-related announcements, and ideas which expand upon what happens in class. This list is also a great way for all of us to interact outside of class; that is to say, if you have a question or query (dramatic in nature), the miracle of technology offers us a way to discuss and address it.

## **Conferences**

I am regularly available to meet with you during my scheduled office hours or by appointment. To make an appointment, speak to me after class or contact me via email.

## **Grading**

2 Papers	40%	Performance Component	10%
Seed Papers/Quizzes:	15%	Participation (email/class)	20%
Final Exam:	15%		

**\*\*You must complete all written assignments and exams to complete the course. Failure to complete any one of the components represents incomplete work for the semester and anyone with incomplete work will not receive a passing grade for the course.**

## **Shorter Written Assignments**

\*Short pieces of writing (2-3 pages) called “seed papers” in which you pose a productive question which relates to the inquiry issues of the course about the text and then attempt to answer it. You will be asked to present and conduct class discussion with your question once during the semester. However, you will be required to write **three** seed essays total:

*\*one must address issues of scenography/symbolism*

*\*one must explore issues of character*

*\*one must deal with specific language in a specific passage*

\*The “Performance Requirement” can be fulfilled in one of two ways:

- a) You may choose to “review” EIU’s theater department production of Ibsen’s A Doll House (2/26-8; 3/1-2) this term. Specific details will be provided as we

get closer to the show dates, and I hope we can organize a group to attend the production together.

- b) **OR** you may choose (in lieu of one of your “review” papers) to participate in the performance of a short dramatic scene. This is not an audition or a test of your acting ability (different abilities will be taken into account); it is, however, an excellent means for you to engage the text in a different way than you might as a reader. Groups will, except in extreme circumstances, receive a single grade for the performance. I will be available to see a given rehearsal or two before you present the scene. Keep in mind that you may stage these scenes with as many props or interpretive risks as you wish; remember though that we will be asking you to explain your choices in relation to the text. If you want to take this option, please notify me **immediately** so we can coordinate the group(s). Monologues are also an option. Details to follow.

### **Other assignments:**

\*Two critical papers (4 pages) that focus on a particular issue that has provoked, challenged, or disturbed your thinking during the course and can be generated from seed papers. Writing guidelines will be handed out in advance.

\*Active, Engaged Participation in Discussion --- defined as TALKING productively.

\*Final Exam

**FINAL GRADES:** Your final grade in the course will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Three Seed Papers	15%
Critical Papers	40%
Final Exam	15%
Performance Component	10%
In-class Writings / Active Participation:	20%

### **Schedule of Assignments**

THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE AT ANY TIME ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS AND DEMANDS OF THE CLASS. MAKE SURE YOU ALWAYS BRING IT WITH YOU FOR MODIFICATION.

January	13	Introductory Comments
	15	“The Rising of the Moon” Jacobus 1-5; 15-28
	17	“Trifles” / Dramatic Language(s)

	20	NO CLASS – MLK Jr. Day
	22	<u>Oedipus the King</u> lines Jacobus 29-36
	24	<u>Oedipus</u> lines
	27	<u>Oedipus</u> lines
	29	<u>Oedipus</u> lines -end
	31	Paper Due / First 20 lines of <u>Dream</u>
February	3	<u>A Midsummer Night's Dream</u> Act One Jacobus 240-43
	5	<u>Dream</u> Act Two
	7	<u>Dream</u> Act Three
	10	<u>Dream</u> Act Four
	12	<u>Dream</u> Act Five
	14	NO CLASS – LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
	17	<u>A Doll House</u> Act One Jacobus 643-656
	19	<u>Doll House</u> Act Two
	21	<u>Doll House</u> Act Three
	24	<u>Cat On a Hot Tin Roof</u> Act One
	26	<u>Cat On a Hot Tin Roof</u> Act Two
	28	Film Showing
March	3	<u>Cat On a Hot Tin Roof</u> Act Three
	5	TBA
	7	Performance Review Due

HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!!!!!

	17	<u>Dancing at Lughnasa</u>
	19	<u>Dancing at Lughnasa</u>
	21	<u>Dancing at Lughnasa</u>
	24	<u>Mrs. Warren's Profession</u>
	26	<u>Mrs. Warren's Profession</u>
	28	<u>Mrs. Warren's Profession</u>
April	31	<u>The Blue Room</u>
	2	<u>The Blue Room</u>
	4	<u>The Blue Room</u>
	7	<u>Closer</u> Act One

	9	<u>Closer</u> Act Two
	11	<u>Closer</u>
	14	<b>Paper #2 Due</b> / “Breath” (handout)
	16	Beckett short works (handout)
	18	Beckett short works
	21	<u>Art</u>
	23	<u>Art</u>
	25	<u>Art</u>
	28	“The Lesson”
	30	“The Lesson”
May	2	Final Exam Review

**\*\*Final exam date TBA.**